PROPOSAL TO EXPAND NARA'S
RECORDS MANAGEMENT TRAINING PROGRAM

I. TRAINING GOALS

The purpose of this paper is to describe how NARA will provide training to Federal agency Records Management Officers, program staff, Information Technology staff, and others regarding new records management policies and procedures. NARA's training program covers all aspects of current law, regulation, policy, procedure, and official guidance related to records management (RM) in the Federal government. During the next two years, NARA will introduce significant shifts in RM program priorities and practice as part of the Records Management Initiative (RMI.) In addition, new scheduling, appraisal, and transfer procedures will result from the Records Lifecycle Business Process Reengineering (BPR) project. To accompany these changes, NARA is planning to expand its RM training program and introduce a new certification program for Federal RM staff and contractors.

The expanded training program will be offered on a phased-in basis, beginning as soon as possible after new policies and procedures are adopted. In fact, NARA staff has already begun developing new guidance and training in selected topics. NARA will convert the goals and specific strategies described in this paper into an implementation plan following review of the proposals, and any needed revisions, in consultation with interested Federal staff.

The goals of the expanded records management program are as follows:

- Teach agency records management officers (RMOs) and other interested parties about new RM policies and procedures.
- Introduce new tools and techniques that will connect RM more directly to agency business programs and priorities.
- Support and assist agency RMOs in providing training and support to key staff throughout their agencies.
- Focus more attention on "highest risk" records that document critical business transactions, provide fiscal, legal, and administrative accountability, and/or contain special historical value.
- Prepare Federal RMOs and other key agency staff to manage electronic records.
- Involve agency RMOs in the ongoing development of NARA's training program.
- Ensure that private contractors possess the knowledge and skills to support agency RM where needed.

II. NEW DIRECTIONS

Based on the RMI and BPR, NARA will begin to improve Federal RM by employing business process analysis to examine programs and the records that support them. The analysis will help us identify risks and set priorities across the landscape of Federal government. To implement this functional strategy we will borrow from the Office of Management and Budget's work on a Business Reference Model to evaluate, plan, and fund Federal programs. NARA will assess the function's place in protecting citizen rights and ensuring government accountability, as well as the function's significance in documenting the nation's history. Using formal risk analysis, NARA will establish priorities for improving RM where it is most critical.

Complementing this business analysis approach, NARA will seek more streamlined Federal RM by adopting concepts of trustworthy records such as reliability, authenticity, integrity and usability from ISO 15489 and through the use of flexible strategies such as "big bucket" records schedules, records retention banding, and media neutrality. These strategies are described in greater detail in NARA's "Proposal for a Redesign of Federal Records Management" (July 2002), "Strategic Directions for Federal Records Management" (July 2003) and in follow-up papers.

In addition to supporting its traditional purpose of educating Federal employees in RM principles and practices, NARA's training program must reflect these changes in policy and practice as well as the increasing challenge posed by electronic records systems. NARA will use a variety of training strategies and formats to reach Federal RM staff during this period of significant change. To this end, a number of strategies are proposed to better inform and educate the Federal community. Note that several of these ideas are already being employed in some form in NARA's training activities. In these cases, they would only need to be expanded to include recent RM strategies and/or be made more widely available.

III. PROPOSED STRATEGIES FOR FEDERAL AGENCY STAFF TRAINING

1. **Develop comprehensive training classes for the Federal RM community on substantive changes in scheduling and appraisal.**

These training classes, generally designed for agency Records Management Officers (RMOs), are essential to implementing the new methods of records scheduling and appraisal. There must be good communication and cooperation between NARA and the Federal RM community in these areas, since this is where the most significant shifts in practice are taking place.

2. **Present half-day seminars to Federal Information Resource Management community.**

These free seminars would serve to introduce Federal RM, IT, and program staff to the new procedures and practices NARA will institute as part of the RMI. For some in the community, this may be all the training they require. For others, attendance at this introductory seminar will help them identify where they need further instruction and the corresponding NARA training opportunities available to them, both at headquarters and in the field. The sessions are intended to be short and very focused, lasting no more than three hours.

3. **For agencies identified as having "at risk" records, develop customized classes through the Targeted Assistance program to address problems.**

NARA and agencies may define or weigh risk from different perspectives, which may change over time in response to specific circumstances. Agencies may be concerned that records (a) support the direct delivery of products and services to government and citizens, (b) document accountability for the decisions and actions of government officials, and (c) support rights of citizens and government. NARA shares these concerns and also considers the long-term value of records documenting the nation's history. NARA has resources available through the Targeted Assistance program to help agencies minimize all types of risks. These partnership projects will include a training component tailored to the needs of the agency and the nature of the risk.

4. **Develop a "Train the Trainer Class" for Federal Records Management Officers.**

Those who complete this workshop will have the knowledge and skill necessary to teach basic RM principles and Federal government practices to their own staffs. This training is not only about RM but also about how to conduct a training session.

5. **Expand NARA's web site to include materials agencies can use as the basis for their own RM training programs.**

These may include briefings, presentation aids, class materials based on NARA's RM syllabi, and links to other Federal and non-Federal resources. The site will be updated frequently.

6. Develop RM information resource kits.

Designed as a readily available reference to "everything you need to know" about Federal RM, these toolboxes will include how to find more detailed answers. Different audiences would receive slightly different toolboxes. Four potential versions are:

Records Management Officer Resource Kit
This is an encyclopedic resource for agency RMOs and agency regional RMOs or liaisons. Contents may include:

- CD-ROM of NARA RM training material
- *Disposition of Federal Records*
- Summation of RM requirements from laws, regulations, notices, bulletins, etc., including extracts of the E-Gov Act, GPEA, Sarbanes-Oxley, etc.
- NARA guidance on lifecycle management of records, especially guidance on managing electronic records
- Procedures for records appraisal, scheduling, and maintenance
- NARA videos/DVDs, pamphlets, brochures, and other publications
- NARA contact information, both headquarters and regional
- Information on vital records and continuity of operations planning
- Sources/URLs for reference and training materials, as well as best practices

Program Manager Resource Kit
This would be a more compact set of resources intended for agency program managers. The focus will be on identifying RM concerns such as preserving records for accountability purposes and mitigating risk. Contents may include:

- RM pamphlets and brochures
- Procedural guide to Federal RM
- NARA contact information, both headquarters and regional
- Information on vital records and continuity of operations planning
- Sources/URLs for reference and training materials, as well as best practices

Information Technology Manager Resource Kit
This kit will be provided to agency IT managers. Contents may include:

- ERA, RMA, and EDMS pamphlets and brochures
- NARA contact information, both headquarters and regional
- Information on vital records and continuity of operations planning
- Sources/URLs for reference and training materials, as well as best practices

Agency Counsel Resource Kit

This kit will be provided to agency legal staff and inspector generals. Contents may include:

- Summation of RM requirements from laws, regulations, notices, etc., including extracts of recent laws and rulings
- Case studies of ruling that involved recordkeeping issues
- NARA guidance on lifecycle management of records
- NARA contact information

7. Develop specialized classes addressing particular risks and concerns to records of functions "owned" by multiple agencies.

These classes will cover RM issues specific to a particular government function, such as records creation, maintenance, and disposition issues related to the public land management program or to Federal revenue collection. A NARA risk assessment and/or discussion with agency RMOs can initiate these special training programs. Where appropriate, these classes might also include representatives of state and local governments that have a significant role in implementing Federal program mandates.

8. Expand NARA's series of electronic records forums.

These sessions, already offered regionally on an *ad hoc* basis, will be an opportunity for agency IT and RMO personnel to discuss common issues, challenges, and solutions. They will also provide an occasion to invite vendors to demonstrate technological solutions to common electronic RM problems, and to hear informal case studies from Federal and non-Federal records managers exploring best practices in electronic recordkeeping. These forums will be especially valuable to staff charged with program implementation.

9. Expand e-mail management course offerings.

Additional guidance on e-mail management is a high priority. E-mail is a challenge for nearly every Federal employee who has a computer. NARA will offer practical guidance for setting up an e-mail sort out process adhering to Federal RM policy. This could also be tailored training that incorporates agency e-mail policies.

10. **For agency IT staff, expand course offerings on electronic recordkeeping requirements and responsibilities.**

This training course will focus on recordkeeping responsibilities that are increasingly shouldered by IT staff, electronic methods of creating and maintaining records, and the need for RM input when new systems are built or overhauled. The training will be conducted with the cooperation and/or participation of the RMOs from the agencies.

11. **Establish a distance learning program.**

Based on a needs assessment, NARA will offer certain training classes to a nationwide audience through a variety of distance learning formats such as videoconference, teleconference, virtual classroom, online, web-based and broadcast. There will be further opportunity for students and instructors to discuss issues online in real time.

12. **Provide short RM briefings for high level managers in established Federal education settings and other venues.**

NARA will arrange to include short (one hour) briefings as part of traditional training of high-level managers. Managers benefit from learning the importance of proper RM and have the authority to influence their agencies' programs. The SES training facility, USDA Graduate School, and FEB forums can provide appropriate venues. The briefing will emphasize executive records responsibilities and the importance of RM in ensuring the availability of information to conduct business.

13. **Develop an interactive, computer-based RM question and answer program.**

This expanded Frequently Asked Questions program will provide answers to common RM questions and contain links to other sources of information. NARA staff will be available to answer questions submitted by e-mail.

14. **Establish a NARA RM training office or officer and an agency RMO advisory committee on training.**

NARA will establish a unit dedicated to RM training. A particular role of this office will be to conduct research and prepare training programs that contain the latest information about electronic records management tools and techniques. The agency advisory committee will meet regularly with NARA to assist in developing the training expanded program and to provide regular assessment and feedback from our customers.

15. **Continue to hold BRIDG meetings and the annual RACO.**

These venues will continue to provide an excellent means of communication among the Federal RM community.

16. **Host periodic lunchtime discussion sessions at facilities where there is a sufficient number of Federal RMO and other interested staff.**

These sessions provide an informal means for agency RMOs and NARA staff to discuss current activities or a specific issue.

17. **Encourage and, to the extent possible, support active participation by NARA staff and agency RMOs in professional organizations.**

Professional organizations such as ARMA, AIIM, NAGARA, and others provide opportunities for Federal RM staff to learn and to exchange ideas and information about current RM issues, problems and solutions.

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